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ners and morals of their caste. She might discipline them with slaps and scolding but was usually indulgent. She taught her children to look to her brother as their authority, and might either report their conduct to him or (more commonly) try to shield them from his correction. A woman's duties to her adult son were to assist in cooking for him, to serve him with food along with other men before she and other women had eaten, and to assist in care of the house. She should offer him counsel and comfort, respecting his wishes but attempting to dissuade him from wrong. Her own moral conduct in the village was a part of her duty to her children. If she infringed the religious laws her shame fell also on them and they were the most likely persons to be visited with supernatural vengeance. A woman should accept the suggestions of her adult son with regard to her conduct. If he became her karanavan she theoretically owed him obedience in law. [593] [861] [604] [626]

A child should respect his mother's teaching, although strict obedience to her was not demanded before the age of five or six. Throughout her life he should revere her, remembering that he owed to her his membership of his taravād and all the birth-status rights of his caste. For her sake he should maintain right relations with his matrilineal kinsfolk, submitting to his male elders and protecting his sisters and their children. A man should protect his mother from slander or physical harm. When he entered the village after an absence he must go first to greet her. While he stayed there he should live in his natal house and make himself available to his mother's requests. He should not incur her jealousy by visiting a wife for long periods in the daytime, or by eating frequently in the house of a wife or of friends. In all things he should place his mother's comfort and the interests of the taravād above his private concerns. In her old age he must offer comfort and companionship to his mother and after death must perform funeral rites and make annual offerings on behalf of her soul. Neglect of the mother by an adult son was the height of impiety. The lineage goddess was believed to inflict sickness on an impious son. [769] [776] [753]

The etiquette of behavior between mother and adult son required mutual respect and a certain restraint on both sides. Each stood when the other entered the room, although they might later sit together and converse informally. They discussed questions of property and the affairs of the taravād in serious confidence, but undignified gossip and talk touching on sexual matters were prohibited between them. 593 576

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WOMAN-SISTER'S CHILDREN

A woman and her sister's children should behave toward each other 604 ● so far as possible in the same way as a woman and her own children. A motherless child was brought up collectively by his mother's sisters, usually attaching himself in particular to one of her younger sisters. As a member of their household who stood in a maternal relationship to them, a woman expected reverence, companionship, and practical help from her sisters' sons and a measure of obedience, companionship, and cooperation in domestic tasks from her sisters' daughters.

Terminologically and behaviorally, the mother's sisters were differentiated by age in relation to the mother. The mother's older sister [601] received more respect than the mother, especially if she was the oldest woman in the household. Her role approximated that of the maternal grandmother after the latter's death. The mother's elder sister usually had children of her own by the time ego was born. She tended to advise ego's mother on how to care for him rather than tending him intimately herself. The mother's younger sister's role, by contrast, approximated that of a much older sister. Before she had children of her own, she often played the part of a long-suffering nursemaid and usually remained a favorite throughout her life. A mother's younger [551] sister who was younger than ego was called by her personal name and treated as a younger sister.

Theoretically, attitudes proper toward the mother should be extended to all women of her generation within the lineage and clan. Actually, a rather sharp distinction was drawn between "mothers" of [601] ego's own property group and those outside it. Behavior which was [602] axiomatic within the property group became a matter of polite [613] etiquette toward more distant kinswomen. Within the property group [614] two or more sibling groups descended from sisters might oppose each other in adulthood. When the maternal grandmother and all males of [578] senior generations were dead, their disputes might culminate in division of the property even while their mothers were living. Such inter-segmental disputes created strains in the relationship with the mother's sisters, but these ought not to become apparent in open quarreling.

WOMAN-DAUGHTER'S CHILDREN

A woman had strong control over her daughter's children. Her authority surpassed that of the mother and she retained the last word in 603 matters of feeding or of care in sickness. At a time when her daughters were absorbed in childbearing and in relations with their husbands, she was deeply concerned for the future of her taravād as a group and

603 took upon herself much of the moral training of her grandchildren. It
[869] was chiefly from the grandmother that children learned religious mythology and stories from their taravād's history. If she was the oldest woman of the house and if her son was kāranavan, a woman of strong personality might virtually direct the household, protecting the grandchildren both from their mother's indulgence and from their uncles' displeasure. She seldom inflicted corporal punishment but was obeyed
[861] by young children more readily than the mother. As they grew to maturity a woman tended to show indulgent pride in her grandsons
[858] as the pillars of her old age. By contrast she might show jealousy of her granddaughters and be a harsher judge of their manners and morals than was their mother.

MAN-SISTER'S SON

- 604 A kāranavan had special rights in and obligations to his sisters' children, some of which have been detailed. As their legal guardian he exercised the rights and obligations which normally accrue to the legal father in the higher patrilineal castes of India. He was responsible for his nephews' training in the laws and morality of their caste, in literacy, in agricultural work, and in military skills. Much of this training he often dispensed in person either before or after he became kāranavan. He was responsible for maintaining the junior men of his taravād and for guarding and, if possible, augmenting the ancestral property on their behalf. In turn they owed him obedience, loyalty, and submissive respect. A kāranavan might inflict a beating on a disobedient nephew under about the age of sixteen or might order a younger brother to do this on his behalf.

604 Relationships with all mother's brothers within the property group were modeled on that with the kāranavan. A man owed all of them respect and obedience within the framework of the kāranavan's jurisdiction. Often a boy's junior mother's brothers were absent from the taravād. When they were home the mother's own brothers took a special interest in him. They might play with him indulgently until he was about the age of three. After this he learned to respect them, to be quiet in their presence, and to fear his mother's report of his ill conduct to them. As he grew older it was usually from his mother's own brothers that a boy received detailed training in agricultural matters and it was they who most frequently chastised him. Throughout their lives a man owed obedience and loyalty to all men of senior generation in his taravād, and after their deaths, regular offerings in propitiation of their spirits.

The etiquette of behavior between a man and his mother's brothers

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was formalized to the point of avoidance. A boy or man might not touch his mother's brother. Before entering the uncle's presence he removed his upper clothing as a mark of respect. He might not speak first to the uncle but stood with arms folded and head bowed, attentively awaiting commands. He might not sit before his uncle except at mealtimes; he then sat down last and rose as soon as the uncle's meal was finished. When summoned for a lengthy interview he stood half hidden behind a pillar, holding his hand before his mouth lest his breath should reach the hearer. He might not chew betel leaves, smoke, spit, or use any but the most serious and respectful language in the presence of his senior. These rules of intercourse were most strict in the relationship with the *kāranavan*. For this reason a *kāranavan* absented himself as much as possible from family gatherings, living on the upper floor of the granary among his age mates of other lineages who came to visit him. With junior mother's brothers, who were more intimately responsible for his education, a youth's behavior was necessarily more relaxed. Even so, he observed the greatest possible formality, walked several feet behind them, and avoided them when he could.

A man should show loyalty to his mother's brothers in relations with outsiders, if necessary defending them with his life. He was expected to identify with them, receiving and perpetuating the noble traditions of his taravād. In fact Nayars did show great pride in the elders of their taravād as a group, exhibiting their virtues and hiding their weaknesses in the presence of strangers. There was regularly, however, deep hostility in their interpersonal relationships. The Nayars of today are well aware of this and expect acrimonious rivalry between the men of a taravād; hence, they say, the need for formal etiquette and strict ranking on the basis of age. A Nayar will speak of himself as bound to his taravād through natural love for his mother and sisters, and obliged for their sakes to maintain outward decorum in his relations with matrilineal kinsmen. In a modified form this suppressed hostility traditionally extended to all the men of the own, first ascending and second ascending generations. All male elders in the taravād might be collectively called *kāranavar* (singular, *kāranavan*). Within the property group they were numbered in order of age (irrespective of generation) as first, second, and third men. All owed loyalty and obedience to those above them and protection to those below them, but all envied their seniors and feared the rivalry of juniors. The mother's own brothers were, however, the prototypes for this generalized rivalry. Whether or not Nayars experienced Oedipal hostility

604 to the mother's husband in their earliest years, there seems no doubt
613 that a great part of their hostility to male elders became focused
561 the mother's brothers by about the age of five, and that much of it
578 remained conscious. Thus occasional stories are told today of nephews
who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers and it is often re-
marked that karanavans are "hated" and that "their position is not
safe." Such tales of violence are regarded as shocking, but they do
not arouse the horror with which a Hindu of the patrilineal castes
would receive a story of patricide.

604 Relationships with the mother's mother's brothers were less intense
561 and rivalrous than with the mother's brothers. Until the age of three
578 or four a small boy might be a playful visitor to the room of the great-
uncle who was his karanavan. Often, this elder died while he was
still small, so that the boy retained only affectionate memories of him.
Otherwise he learned to behave with even greater formality to this
elder than to his mother's brothers. He saw the great-uncle less often,
however, and was seldom directly punished by him, so that the rela-
tionship tended to remain one of distant geniality.

604 MAN-SISTER'S DAUGHTER

As the head of her taravād a karanavan owed his sister's daughter
maintenance, shelter, and legal and physical protection. At her tāl
rite and during her subsequent marriage relationships, only the sexual
rights in a woman were lost to her taravād. All other rights, in her
procreative powers and domestic services, remained vested in her
taravād, represented by its karanavan. He could command her obe-
dience in the performance of household and minor agricultural work.
[429] He automatically became the full legal guardian of children born to
[684] her legitimately. If she seriously infringed the religious laws of her
caste, for example, by having sex relations with a man of lower caste,
it was his duty to expel her from the taravād and his right (very
occasionally exercised) to put her to death by the sword.

604 In the nineteenth century, when monogamy gradually became cus-
584 tomary, a karanavan arranged the marriage of his sister's daughter.
595 In earlier periods Nayar women seem to have exercised considerable
178 freedom to select or reject their husbands. A woman might not, how-
ever, oppose her karanavan's right to dismiss an unwelcome husband.

604 All the mother's brothers of a woman had the right to command
her domestic services and to discipline her in minor ways. As in the
case of a boy, they might play with her until she reached the age of
three or four, after which they became somewhat feared authorities.

[861] A man might occasionally beat his sister's daughter, until the age of

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seven or eight, but he would not inflict heavy punishment unless he was sure of the child's grandmother's and her karanavan's support. After she had undergone the tāli rite a man was forbidden to touch any junior woman of his taravād. His relationship with his sister's daughter thereafter became very distant. In accordance with rules associated with incest prohibitions, he might not be alone in a room with her and would scrupulously avoid suspicion of intimacy. He would absent himself when her husband entered the house, remaining on the outer veranda, in the separate men's building, or in the house of his wife. A woman must remain standing and remove her upper clothing when her mother's brother entered her presence. She must not speak first to him, must not laugh in his presence, and must respond with extreme submissiveness to his requests. When possible a man would communicate advice to his sister's daughter through some kinswoman senior to both of them. Thus, except to serve him with food, a woman had little direct intercourse with her mother's brothers.

Modern Nayars admit freely that the partial avoidance between men of the taravād, on the one hand, and that between men and women junior to them in the taravād, on the other, have quite different foundations. The former is a defense against aggression, the latter against desire. Nayars partially avoid their younger sisters and nieces, it is admitted, because otherwise they might be tempted to commit incest with them. As things are, in speaking with others, men often express a respectful tenderness toward their sisters' daughters and a pride in their qualities. Because of the difference of sex, and therefore of ambitions and interests, there is much less potential conflict here than in the relationship with the sister's son. By an orthodox karanavan in particular, its young women are seen as the fine flower of his taravād. Whatever may be his more selfish inner feelings, he expresses gladness when there are many of them to perpetuate his matrilineal group. For their sakes and for the sake of the heirs they may bring him, he welcomes their husbands to his home. When the latter are aristocrats of higher caste, his pride seems the more easily to outweigh any potential hostility toward them.

In orthodox homes today, women's attitudes to their mothers' brothers seem to be variously compounded of fear and admiration. A woman fears her uncle's anger and may resent his harshness toward her brothers and sons. If, however, he manages her household with equity and if his reputation stands high in his neighborhood, he may become a distant hero in her eyes.

MAN-SISTER

593 Within the kinship circle, a man's concern for his sisters should come second only to that for his mother. He had greater authority over them, but he owed them similar protection and consideration. If he became their karanavan, he must manage the property on their behalf and educate their children to the best of his ability. A woman owed her brother domestic services, obedience, and devotion. Brother and sister should, when necessary, subordinate their own marital interests to each other's comfort and welfare.

[587] The elder sister shared something of the mother's role; the younger sister, that of the sister's daughter. Indeed, as in all relationships within the taravād, the significance of age surpassed that of generation; for when age and generation were discrepant the attitudes appropriate to age overrode those appropriate to generation.

593 561 A much older sister might help to bring up a boy in the same manner as the mother's younger sister. As he grew to maturity her attitude combined sharp criticism with maternal solicitude. When both were adult, however, difference of sex became a greater determinant of authority than did difference of age. Although she might continue to speak informally with him or even to upbraid him mildly, the elder sister stood in her brother's presence and received his commands with respect. If he became karanavan, the younger brother's ultimate legal authority was unquestioned. His sister might, however, remain his trusted counselor for life.

[588] Until her tāli rite a girl played freely with her elder brothers and was affectionately patronized by them. After this time an outer formality was required between them, identical with that preserved toward the sister's daughter. Inwardly the relationship was expected to be more intense, with less authority and more tenderness on the part of the brother, less fear and more devotion on the part of the sister, and today, in speech with others, young childless women often display a simple hero worship for their elder brothers. As a woman's children grew to maturity, her brother's discipline of them might create tensions in the sibling relationship. She should, however, continue to submit willingly to his wishes. A man who was not her karanavan had no right to dismiss his sister's husband from their home. Nevertheless, a woman who knew that her brother deeply disliked her husband would feel it her duty to reject him.

593 835 The very formal behavior required between a man and his younger sister is consciously related to incest prohibitions. Sibling incest is in fact very rare and was traditionally punished by death. Enough

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cases are known in modern times however to show that the temptation was real. The reasons for the partial avoidance between men and younger women of the taravād apparently lie in the descent system. Brothers, in common with other men of the taravād, owned the procreative rights in a woman. They shared property and a home with her and were jointly the guardians of her children. With all these shared interests a strong devotion to her was axiomatic and inevitable. Yet brothers must forswear completely the sexual rights in their sister and surrender these to other men. Their formalized, partial avoidance of their younger kinswoman facilitated their continued devotion, side by side with the sexual prohibition. At the same time it completely segregated their interests in her from those of her husbands and thus made tolerable the relationships between brothers-in-law.

Life histories and the behavior of small children suggest that a man's near-conscious attraction toward his sister is a displacement of his earlier and more intense Oedipal attachment to his mother. The latter is apparently repressed at about the age of five, together with similar motives toward other older matrilineal kinswomen. It is uncertain whether Nayar boys developed Oedipal hostility toward their mothers' husbands in early childhood. Perhaps they did, for a child shared his mother's sleeping room until the age of three or four and must have witnessed parental sexual relations. If Oedipal rivalry did develop, much of the hostility seems to have been displaced toward the mother's brothers as they became the significant authorities in the child's world. There is in any case a realistic basis in the mother's brother's hard discipline for aggressive motives toward him. Mythology and religious rites suggest that these two forbidden motives—aggression toward older matrilineal kinsmen and desire for union with matrilineal kinswomen—remained powerful throughout a man's life. It is therefore easy to see why observance of the rules of formal etiquette toward older men and toward younger women of the taravād represented, for a Nayar, the essence of familial piety. The rules counteracted his deepest unsocialized impulses and made possible the harmonious coöperation of the matrilineal group. It is reasonable also to conclude that tensions arising within this natal group must have been eased by the fact that aggression and sexuality, sternly prohibited within the lineage, were encouraged outside it in warfare, organized dueling, and very free sexual relationships.

A man's hidden concern for his sister's sexuality seems to have found an approved outlet in the jealousy with which he was expected to guard her from any taint of contact with low-caste men. Organized

835 At least during this century, moreover, cases have very occasionally occurred in which a Nayar cohabited both with his wife and with their daughter by the marriage or with his wife and her younger sister. Such affairs are viewed with disgust as evidence of extreme ill-breeding, but they do not merit excommunication or exclusion from public ceremonies, nor are the offenders expected to fall ill through supernatural vengeance. The reason appears to be that traditionally only matrilineal kinsfolk were regarded as kin in the true sense. Incest prohibitions outside this range were apparently a matter of propriety rather than of religious law.

604 A man's wife's sisters' children, like his own children, had an amicable relationship with him of mingled respect and playfulness. [588] After their tāli rite, however, girls were forbidden to touch their [885] "fathers," own or classificatory, and relationships with these men tended to become more grave.

607 Brothers-in-law had informal relationships. A man would defer to his wife's much older brother and expect some respect from his wife's much younger brother. Brothers-in-law of similar age had a mild joking relationship. They might chew betel leaves, loll, yarn, and gossip together. A man's sisters' husbands sometimes acted as go-betweens in arranging his first sambandham and accompanied him to [578] the house of his wife. But the surface amicability of brothers-in-law often hid very deep hostility related to conflicting claims upon the woman who linked them. This might break out in quarrels or end in mutual avoidance. The wife's brother was also often instrumental in having a man dismissed from the conjugal house.

602 A woman's contacts with her husband's kin were obviously less regular than those of a man. A woman never went to her husband's taravād to visit him for personal reasons but only to pay polite social calls on his kinswomen. When a man or girl began their first sambandham the man's mother and sisters customarily went to bring home his wife a few days after the husband's first visit. Often the wife's sisters would accompany her. They were given a small feast in private and the husband's mother might make a gift of jewelry to the girl before she returned home on the third or fourth day. Thereafter the frequency of feminine visits between the two households depended on the stability of the marriage, the proximity of the houses, and the personal feelings between the members. Neither husband nor wife did any tasks at all in each other's homes. Each remained always an outsider to whom polite behavior was due. Because of incest prohibitions a woman paid extreme respect to her husband's elder matrilineal kinsmen they avoided her except on ceremonial occasions.

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kinsmen and they avoided her except on ceremonial occasions. She had a relationship of mutual courtesy with all of her husband's older kinswomen and was given meticulous respect by her husband's junior kinsfolk of both sexes. The *ammāyi* (mother's brother's wife) and the *chēdatti amma* (elder brother's wife) play a role in Nayar jokes and folk tales somewhat comparable to that of the stepmother in Europe. As was mentioned in connection with witchcraft, junior members of a taravād habitually resented these women's hold over their husbands and represented them as grasping, unscrupulous, and intent on robbing their husbands' juniors. This fear of the mother's brother's wife was however much more pronounced in North Malabar, where marriage was monogamous or polygynous and residence avunculocal. [602] [604] [607] [522] [538] [184]

Co-wives and the wives of brothers, being in different houses, had no institutionalized relationships and apparently very little contact. The husbands of women of a property group also had only slight relationships. There was no structure of authority between them because they performed no activities together. The younger men accorded some deference to the older, but all might sit together informally and exchange news. [597] [595] [602] [592]

Virtually nothing is known of the relationships between co-husbands except the testimony of several writers from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries that they "agreed very well" with each other. They are said to have distributed the woman's time among them in a convenient manner "according as they can fix a term among themselves" (Hamilton, ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 172). [595]

Among the Nayars of this area, households of the linked lineages or enangar fulfilled the customary obligations and carried out the ceremonial roles which were required of an individual's affinal or matrilineal kin in the patrilineal castes of Kerala. It was enangar who must take part in life-crisis rites, make gifts at first menstruation and marriage ceremonies, and come to assist at deaths. Enangar were of course often currently affines of the households in which they officiated, for sambandham relationships took place most intensively between lineages of the local caste group. However, the enangar relationship did not derive from particular sambandham ties nor was it brought about by particular tāli rites. It was rather a hereditary relationship of "perpetual affinity" between lineages as groups, which persisted irrespective of the making and breaking of particular sexual ties. When a man who happened to have sambandham with some woman of a household acted there in his role of enangan, he did so as a representative of his lineage, irrespective of his interpersonal mar- [613] [592]

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574 taravād. A woman might also visit for several weeks each year.
[593] Brother and younger sister, like a man and his sister's daughter, ob-
served rules of partial avoidance—associated with incest prohibitions
• [604]—during their periods of co-residence.

591 Sisters were always separated upon marriage, for the Nayars of
582 this area, unlike those to the south, forbade the marriage of two
brothers to two sisters. They say that such marriages would endanger
the unity of the brothers' taravād by introducing into it too strong a
613 contingent from another lineage (Gough, 1952). Sisters were together,
591 however, during childhood in their father's house, and were often
[593] reunited in old age when they went back to the taravād. Although
[763] they might seldom have stayed there during childhood and early
youth, women seem usually to have died in their matrilineal an-
[586] cestral homes. A woman was often widowed in old age. Alternatively
[764] she might elect to leave her husband and return to her taravād and
sons when her period of childbearing was ended. In any case a
woman's body had to be cremated and her funeral rites performed
in the garden of her taravād house.

- [431] Women in avunculocal residence were partly maintained by their
husbands' taravāds in return for domestic services. Nevertheless, im-
portant distributive ties persisted between them and their matrilineal
kinsmen. Usually their kāranavan sent quantities of grain and clothing
to them and their children twice annually after the harvests as part
of their maintenance.

585 MARRIAGE

- [582] Following the tāli rite, a girl entered into a marriage relationship
(sambandham) with one man at about the age of eleven. The father's
sister's son, if of suitable age, was considered the rightful claimant.
[686] If the girl did not marry him her kāranavan must pay a token fine to
him at the marriage ceremony. The giving of the cloth by the
husband which marked the start of a sambandham was carried out
with ceremony in the girl's ancestral house and was the occasion for
a large feast to relatives of both parties. After the marriage had been
consummated in the girl's house the couple were ceremonially con-
ducted to the bridegroom's taravād and the girl was formally received
into it by her husband's mother and his kāranavan's wife.

- [684] While a marriage endured the husband had exclusive rights in his
[848] wife's sexuality. If he detected her in adultery he might by custom
kill her lover, cut off the hair of his wife, and send her home after
divorce. A woman was not, however, excommunicated from caste

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obligations, some fathers, especially karanavans, kept their children residing with them for most of their lives and gave them property. A child owed his father obedience and respect. If a man divorced his wife her children also left him and might see little of him thereafter. However, they had to observe ritual pollution at his death and his eldest son took part in his funeral rites along with the chief matrilineal heir. The eldest son also made annual offerings to his dead father's spirit. In general the relationship with the father was thought of as intimate and loving. Children must respect him and a daughter must not touch him after her puberty. But having no legal authority, the father was not feared. His role was sharply contrasted with that of the mother's brother. Uncles were said to teach by scolding and punishment; fathers, by persuasion and laughter.

The father's kin had privileges and obligations at life-crisis rites—most of which took place in the individual's taravād house—and were feasted and made gifts at the ceremonies of first pregnancy, naming, first rice feeding, tāli tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death. At the naming ceremony, when a baby was one month old, the father's mother chose the name, the father's father conferred it, and the father presented the child with a gold waistband. The karanavan fulfilled these roles in Central Kerala.

A person was forbidden to marry his father's sibling or paternal parallel cousin of the father's property group. Affectionate respect was the proper attitude toward all the father's older kin. The paternal grandmother played with a child but did not idolize him as she did her daughter's child, for he was not of her taravād. Unless he was also a child's karanavan, the paternal grandfather was a distant kinsman who had little to do with his grandchild. The mother's father, on the other hand, usually doted on his grandchild and was a cherished companion.

Male cross cousins had a joking relationship and were often close companions. Their relationship might be tinged with hostility concerning the property of their respective father and mother's brother. Sometimes, at least in the nineteenth century, they quarreled openly over the inheritance and became enemies thereafter. Male and female cross cousins had a joking relationship with implicit sexual privileges if the girl was younger than the man. A boy who returned to his taravād at puberty often married his matrilineal cross cousin thereafter. Even if she married someone else he might sleep with her illicitly before or after the marriage. Elders were either ignorant or

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605 oblivious of these affairs. If the husband found out he might keep
832 quiet or might divorce his wife, but he would not be likely to take
837 vengeance.

AFFINES

602 The etiquette of behavior between affines was practically identical
576 in North and Central Kerala, but in the North they had recognized
184 obligations.

602 During her marriage a woman became partly integrated into her
592 husband's property group. Her husband could request her to cook and
613 do limited domestic work for any of his matrilineal kin. She would
[593] do so regularly if she lived in an avunculocal extended family. In
such households there was a certain authority structure between the
wives of matrilineally related men, based on the relative age of the
husbands. The oldest woman directed the group and the younger
ones should obey her. Matters went most smoothly when a woman
was the mother of her husband's niece-in-law. Older women in
avunculocal households did not, however, have the unequivocal
authority over junior wives which is found in the patrilocal extended
families of the higher patrilineal castes of India. They would never
beat a girl and usually courted her affection. If the young wife was
dissatisfied she might urge her husband to move to a separate house,
go home for long periods, or even seek a divorce.

[598] In strict avunculocal residence the karanavan's wife had domestic
[607] authority, keeping the keys of storerooms and directing the younger
[604] wives. However, if any woman born into the taravād returned to
live in it she could demand the internal management of the home as
a right. The relations between a woman and her husband's sisters and
nieces were thus often strained. Soon after such a natal kinswoman
returned to her home in this way, the karanavan would try to move his
wife into a separate building to avoid feminine disputes. However, a
younger wife often lived for several years in the same house with her
husband's widowed mother and was expected to obey her with good
grace.

602 A woman and her husband's older matrilineal kinsmen avoided one
613 another—except on ceremonial occasions—because of incest prohibi-
tions. She was accorded meticulous respect by her husband's younger
matrilineal kin, who usually feared and resented her influence over
her husband. Gruesome proverbs told of the tortures which men and
women would like to inflict on the wives of their elder brothers and
uncles, and it was said that "If the uncle's wife and nephews sit down
[604] peaceably together, *nux vomica* and bitter gourds will turn to honey."

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181 accumulating religious merit against the life to come. With regard to their interests in this world, the ancestors resemble their descendants.

769 Lineage ghosts are powerful beings who can help or harm the living. The effect which they exert on the fortunes of the living is much greater than that exerted by the living on their own. They can aid their descendants by preserving crops, cattle, houses, and children, but their punitive characteristics are those most emphasized.

[782] Offerings to ghosts are designed less toward seeking positive good than toward averting misfortune. There is no idealization of the ghosts as morally superior beings. They are human in their failings of envy and bad temper, and indeed, even more capricious than the living. They may punish wrongdoing with a degree of justice, but they do not look sympathetically into the hearts of propitiants, and are almost as likely to exact vengeance for accidental mistakes in the performance of rites as for wilful immorality. Nāyars do not attempt to enter intimate spiritual communion with them or to please them by inner suffering and renunciation. Rather, the ghosts are bought off with gifts of food in order that their envy may be appeased.

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561 These attitudes to the ancestors¹² are, it seems, directly related to relationships with the senior generation among the living. A man's relationship with his mother's brother is, from childhood, one of stern discipline. All mother's brothers have authority over their nephews and in traditional households may inflict corporal punishment on adolescents. There is a marked lack of intimacy between senior and junior men within the *taravād*, and the sanction on a nephew's good conduct is fear of punishment rather than fear over loss of love. Good *kāranavans* are devoted to their juniors in a stern and dutiful manner. They are proud of their *taravād* as against the rest of the world, but they do not exhibit personal tenderness to their juniors. Power is vested in the senior generation; there is little feeling that a nephew could wield power over his uncle by withdrawing his emotional support. Great emphasis is placed on a formal etiquette of dignified and respectful behavior, amounting to partial avoidance, but neither party need feel that he loves the other in his heart. Nephews will not normally readily reveal hostility toward their uncles before outsiders, for they wish to preserve the dignity of the *taravād*. But they do publicly acknowledge hostility under provocation, and more frequently accuse the uncle of aggression toward themselves. That hostility is a normal component of relationships with mother's brothers is proverbial among Nāyars. They recognize this as the reason why a formal etiquette of behavior is indispensable. And even in spite of the stringent rules regulating the intercourse of mother's brother and sister's son, physical aggression between them may occur.

[626] In spite of the supernatural sanctions against violence within the lineage, I heard several stories of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers. Aged *kāranavans* of large *taravāds* often complain of their loneliness. They may not behave intimately with their juniors and know in their hearts that they are hated and envied. "Indeed," as one Nāyar remarked, "in an old-fashioned *taravād* the position of the *kāranavan* is not safe." The office of *kāranavan* is, of course, much coveted. Junior men commonly number themselves off in order of age-rank as second, third, fourth men, etc., and with divided feelings await the demise of those above them which [593] will raise them to higher rank. The relationship between older and younger brothers, own or classificatory, is only slightly less stern and formal than that between mother's brother and sister's son.

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562 The relationship of a woman with her mother's brother is less harsh than that

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between males, for a woman does not offer the threat of a rival to her male superior. Difference of sex, however, makes this relationship even more formal than that between men. Women do not appear frequently in the presence of their mothers' brothers. They occupy separate wings of the house, and intercourse between the sexes is severely restricted. Toward older brothers a woman's relationship is restricted almost to the point of avoidance. If she commits a misdemeanor, especially a sexual one, a woman immediately fears men senior to her in the *taravād*. Formerly, she might be executed by her brothers if she had sexual relations with a lower caste man. In an orthodox household today, a girl who becomes pregnant by a low caste man will be either expelled from the house by her male seniors or, at best, will be thrashed and will receive much subsequent harsh treatment.

It may be wondered why, since women are excluded from legal authority and from participation in the cult, ancestresses are believed capable of harming *taravād* members. The explanation of this, too, seems to lie in the content of relationships with the mother and other natal kinswomen. Women have no legal authority over their juniors. Indeed, the mother of a *kāranavan* is herself under his jurisdiction. Women do, however, exercise great moral authority over their children throughout their lives. In Cochin with duoloccal residence, the care of children under about the age of five is almost entirely in the hands of women in a traditional *taravād*. Their fathers have no rights over them, the *kāranavan* is too remote a figure to concern himself with details of child training, and junior men of the *taravād* are often absent from home. A mother commonly treats her small children with indulgence, but is necessarily also the source of many frustrations, while the maternal grandmother and women of her generation are strict disciplinarians.

In Kottayam, where residence was traditionally avunculocal, children were frequently brought up in the *taravād* of the father. In such households today, the child has an intimate, affectionate relationship with his father who undertakes a part of his personal care. When the father's *kāranavan* is also the mother's father (as fairly often occurs with cross-cousin marriage), he and his wife treat the child with indulgence. Otherwise, they tend to have only a slight relationship with him and may even resent his claim to temporary hospitality in their house. The mother is, in these circumstances, again the child's chief mentor and disciplinarian, and he learns very early that his mother's brothers, though living elsewhere, are the real authorities whom he must respect and to whom he will return at adolescence, as their heir. In both areas the reverence acquired for the mother is perpetuated throughout life. Her wishes and those of his elder sister take precedence over those of a man's wife, to whom he has a very subsidiary attachment. The relationship with the mother is clearly characterized by great depth of emotion and by greater tenderness than that toward male seniors. Even so, it appears that in this relationship too, the emotion is usually consciously ambivalent. I illustrate this statement briefly with reference to the relationship between only one man and his mother, but it is characteristic of many. This Cochin Nāyar, aged thirty-five, visited us stealthily in the evenings and kept his visits from his mother, telling her he had business in the town. He was afraid she would become jealous, and angry with him for eating Christian food. She watched over him, upbraiding him when he spent much time in the house of his wife and children. He took care to be prompt for meals, and although he found her food inadequate he would not complain in case he appeared to slight her cookery. He had had a high

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Funeral and *brāddham* rites persist in a fuller form, but these, too, are often curtailed. This is especially the case in *taravāds* which have lost their ancestral wealth. Rice balls are sometimes offered only on the two last days of the pollution period. Only close kin, and not the whole Nāyar community, are invited to the sixteenth day feast. Often no *dīkṣā* is observed at all. Alternatively, twelve sets of *dīkṣā* rites, for the twelve months of the year of mourning, may be performed in succession on the sixteenth day. Often the bones are not taken to a sacred river. If they are taken, it may be believed that the ghost is thenceforth appeased and that no further *brāddham* or ancestral rites are required.

The role-structure of death rites has also changed. In most households only immediate younger brothers and maternal nephews, or the own children of a deceased woman, take part in the offerings, instead of the whole *taravād* as heretofore. On the other hand, women, as well as men, now offer rice balls to the ghosts of their parents or matrilineal elders. This reflects a change in the legal status of women, and the fact that women are now the legal heads of many recently partitioned households. In elementary family households, spouses now frequently observe death pollution for one another. At the same time, each may now even refuse to attend the funerals of matrilineal kin. Both in Cochin and Kottayam, the son of a man now often replaces the matrilineal heir as chief mourner, especially if he has inherited his father's property. Nāyars indeed say that "the rites go with the property." If there are disputes over the property, sons and nephews may dispute the right to perform the ceremonies, feeling that their performance gives the chief mourner the right of inheritance. Some men perform rites for both father and mother's brother; others, for neither, if neither bequeathed wealth. The beliefs which accompany funeral and *brāddham* rites have also suffered attrition. In general, the belief that death rites are performed solely to give rest to the spirit is triumphing over the belief in the necessity to propitiate punitive ghosts. On the other hand, the Nāyars do not dwell on the traditional Brahmanical belief in the tortures of hell which await unpropitiated souls. Many state that they now disbelieve in any form of afterlife. These perform rites only as a mark of respect for and commemoration of the dead. A very few refuse to observe death pollution or to perform funeral rites at all. One educated Nāyar, for example—a medical doctor—stated that on the deaths of his parents he would merely cremate their bodies and invite a few like-minded friends to a meal to commemorate them.

Analysis. Behind these changes lie several separable though related kinds of change in Nāyar social structure and culture. With regard to changes in the cults of dead kinsfolk, the collapse of the *taravād* as a legal and economic corporation is of major importance. With the loss of collective legal responsibility which this entails goes a loss of the sense of collective moral responsibility. Nāyars who are no longer legally responsible for one another, who no longer share land, a common house, and a common destiny, no longer think it probable that their misdemeanors can bring misfortune to each other.

The collapse of the *taravād* is also, of course, accompanied by a total change in the relationships between matrilineal kin. Mother's brothers whose property is divided from that of their nephews no longer have authority over them. Indeed, the mother's brother is now often absent in his wife's house when a child is growing up and exerts no discipline over him. In any case the change which takes place in matrilineal relationships after a modern division of property is very marked. One man whose *taravād*

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613 was still undivided commented to me on this change. "In my *taravād*," he said, "I
● 604 dare not speak before the *kāranavan* without standing and placing my hand before
my mouth. But in K. *taravād*, after their partition, I have seen the nephews sitting
to play cards with their uncle and passing the cigarette from their mouth to his.
When I saw this I knew that relationship means property, and without property
there is no relationship."

178 Moreover, the change to elementary family households does not merely entail
594 a shift of the same disciplinary functions from the mother's brother to the father.
152 Nāyar fathers have a tradition of indulgent tenderness toward their children and are
593 loth to discipline them. Even when they are forced to do so, the techniques of dis-
cipline differ from those in a traditional *taravād* house. In the intimate atmosphere
of the small elementary family household, traditional etiquette is abandoned. Children
learn to obey both parents from love more than from fear. There appears to be a
[154] much deeper repression of aggression than in the traditional setting, and correspond-
[769] ingly, many young Nāyars cannot entertain the notion that their parents' ghosts
could act punitively toward them. It seems probable that such changes in the modes
of handling aggression—affected also by the collapse of the military tradition and
the modern legal ban on all forms of physical aggression—may also lie behind the
repugnance of modern Nāyars for such other traditional religious forms as blood
sacrifice and spirit possession.

178 Also important in the abandonment of ghost cults is, however, an increased tend-
564 ency toward the adoption of Sanskrit rites. This tendency, which has marked all
177 the non-Brahman castes during the past hundred years or so, I would associate with
increasing mobility within the caste system and, most recently, with its gradual
collapse. For the Nāyars, as for the lower castes, the Brahmins are no longer a group
with whom they have fixed status relationships. Instead, the Brahmins are now
a reference group whom the Nāyars emulate and with whom they compete in the
struggle for high rank and respectability. Some Nāyars who still hold their traditional
beliefs in ancestral spirits and deities deliberately "purge" their rites of non-Sanskritic
elements in order to gain respectability. Others have changed both rites and beliefs
toward a modified form of the Brahmanical religion, even while they are busy repudi-
ating the religious authority of the Brahman. Yet others, whose number is probably
increasing, repudiate both Brahmanical and non-Sanskritic religions in their orthodox
[829] forms. Instead, they work out for themselves a more or less agnostic world view with
humanitarian ideals, in which ceremonies, if they figure at all, figure only as acts of
piety toward respected persons.

178 The cults of alien ghosts are also changing their form and gradually dying out.
769 This change accompanies the gradual collapse of the caste system as a system of ranked
564 occupational groups linked by hereditary service ties. The collapse of the caste system
itself results from the growth of the capitalist market economy and the democratiza-
tion of political institutions. Some Nāyars retain their beliefs in witchcraft and
sorcery, but the categories of persons whom they suspect are no longer solely caste
[755] determined. They are as likely to include fellow factory workers or competitors in
[782] government service, irrespective of caste. Professional exorcists of appropriate caste are
often no longer available, for many have left their traditional work. So also have many of
the low caste families who formerly propitiated ghosts and minor deities associated
with village temples or with Nāyar *taravāds*. Since the passing of the Temple Entry

writes thus in speaking of the Nâyars:—"When the man, visits the woman he lays down his arms at the door; but, if there are no arms at the door, any acquaintance may visit her. To visit the house when there are arms at the door, or remove them, is death." Now-a-days a man leaves his shoes outside the door. Equality of the sexes in all sexual matters, the man and woman being on terms of equality, having equal freedom, is certainly an uncommon merit in the Marumakkattâyam system. Either party may terminate the union—even after one night of hymeneal bliss; and those who are unsuited to each other sexually, or in the way of temperament, in fact in any way, may put an end to their union and turn towards other partners. It may be thought that this liberty induced perpetual change, so it is as well to state here that it does nothing of the kind. Mere arbitrary divorce is very rare. Permanent attachment is the rule. The basis of the system seems to be that the Taravâd estate is held in trust for the support of the females and of their descendants in the female line. This trust is placed in the hands of the Kâranavan, the senior male member of the Taravâd who is the legal guardian of every member of it, and whose control of the Taravâd property is absolute. The odd feature in the Marumakkattâyam system is that a man has his nephews about him in the house, and not his sons. He lives in one house, while his wife and family live in another. That is, in South Malabar; in North Malabar they live together.

When we come to consider the degrees of relationship within which marriage is prohibited, we find the rule is that persons descended from a common female ancestor are not at liberty to marry. Those of the same Taravâd can never intermarry; but this prohibition does not of course extend to the children of a brother and a sister, who are naturally of different Taravâds. Again, the principle that "no member of the Taravâd of a deceased wife or husband (is) eligible as the second wife or husband is true only as far as the woman is concerned; for a man may marry a woman of his deceased wife's Taravâd. But he who does this is not in harmony with social sentiment." We find this observance amongst the forest Mûppans of Wynâd. In the case of a man's wife dying, I found that a Mûppan could not take another wife from her family.

The rule does not interfere with union between the children (or their descendants) of a brother and sister

765 of boundaries. With the observance of the Pinda Atiyantaram or feast of pindams, there is involved the Diksha, or leaving the entire body unshaved for 41 days, or for a year. There is no variable limit between 41 days or a year. Forty-one days is permissible as the period for the Diksha, but a year is correct. The 41-day period is the rule in North Malabar.

[593] I have seen many who were under the Diksha for a year. He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew [604] of the deceased. One member only of the Taravād bears the mark of mourning by his growth of hair, remarkable [302] enough in Malabar where every one as a rule, excepting the Māppila Muhammadans (and they shave their heads), shaves his face, head (except the patch on the crown) chest and arms, or at any rate his wrists. He who is under the Diksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly seeds to the spirit of the deceased every morning after [784] his bath; and he is under restriction from women, from alcoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also tobacco. When the Diksha is observed, the ashes of the dead are not deposited as described already (in the sun-dried vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year after death. When it is carried on for a year there is observed every month a ceremony called * Bali. It is noteworthy [821] that, in this monthly ceremony and for the conclusion of the Diksha, it is not the thirtieth or three hundred and [305] sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the ceremonies, but it is the day (of the month) of the star which was presiding when the deceased met his death: the returning day on which the star presides.

793 For the * Bali, a man of the Elāyatu caste officiates. 564 It has been said already ("Nambūtiri Brāhmans": 765 Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I), that the Elāyatus are priests for the Nāyars. They wear the Brāhman's thread, but they are not Brāhmans. They are not permitted to study the Vēdas, but to the Nāyars they stand in the place of the ordinary Purōhit. The officiating Elāyatu prepares the rice for the Vēli when the deceased, represented by Karuka grass, is offered boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds and some other things. The Elāyatu should be paid a rupee for his services, which are considered necessary even when the man under Diksha himself is familiar with the required ceremonial.

765 The last day of the Diksha is one of festivity. After 603 the * Bali the man under Diksha is shaved. All this over

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coconut in half, returned amid music, and entered the middle room. The barber woman dressed her and threw rice on her head.

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The girl's mother's brother's wife then carried a plank of the milk tree into the marriage shed, walked round with it three times, and placed it on a mat over rice and paddy. The Tandan of the local group must be present to witness the rites. The mother's brother's wife and other women, or in some areas the *karanavan*, led out the girl who, with her face hidden by a cloth, walked three times round and sat on the plank. The barber man instructed her to perform an offering of rice and water to the household lamp and the post supporting the south-east corner of the shed, which had previously been set up by the carpenter with ceremonies at an auspicious time. The girl threw more rice to the cardinal points, the earth, and the sky. Gold and silver coins, salt, rice, paddy, turmeric, charcoal, and pieces of old cadjan leaf from the house-thatch were then tied separately in leaves and placed in a mud pot. The mouth of the pot was covered with a leaf and tied with string. The girl sprinkled rice over the pot, broke a hole in the lid, and picked out one of the articles, which was examined as an augur of her destiny and of the number of children she would bear. She then twisted off a coconut from a bunch hanging at the corner of the shed. Each of her relatives threw a new cloth over her head. Half of the cloths were given to the barber, who at this point uncovered the girl's face and head and poured coconut water from a leaf of the pipal tree on to a silver and a copper coin which he had placed upon her head. Her *karanavan* asked the astrologer if the auspicious time had arrived, after which the barber woman handed the *tali* to the mother's brother's wife who tied it round the girl's neck. The barber woman poured water on the girl's hands: this she threw upwards three times and once each to the cardinal points. A lit cotton wick, steeped in oil, was twisted round a rod of bamboo stuck in a young coconut. The girl was required to look at the sun and at this wick. She then walked three times round a coconut tree in the garden, pouring water at its root. This concluded the ceremonies. Unfortunately, I have no record of whether the girl was further secluded after the rites were over.

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Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909-12, I, p. 288) reports that the *tali* was tied 'either by the maternal or paternal aunt or by the would-be mother-in-law, if the husband for her has already been selected'. All of these kinswomen (mother's brother's wife, father's sister and husband's mother) are real or potential mothers-in-law because of cross-cousin marriage. My own informants and also Aiyappan state that the rite included an initiation into cookery: the girl was made to grind condiments on a grindstone and to pretend to cook milk porridge before the *tali* was tied. Aiyappan reports that the barber woman instructed her, and at the end said: 'Prepare sweet porridge, give it to father and mother, and to me, and keep what remains in the *uri*' (a rope support to keep vessels suspended).

This initiation rite, while, like the Nayar one, symbolizing the girl's attainment of maturity and her passage to the status of a married woman, is adapted to the occupation and kinship of Tiyyars. It is significant that to attain 'wifehood' a Tiyyar girl must grind condiments and make porridge - a foreshadowing of her domestic duties as wife.

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The mother's brother's wife and the father's sister are preferred mothers-in-law for a Tiyyar girl. The fact that either could be replaced by the actual prospective mother-in-law if the girl were already betrothed proves that they acted in the rite as potential mothers-in-law. The mother's brother's wife is of course suited to become a girl's mother-in-law in a matrilineal system which recognizes strong paternal claims (see Fortes 1953, p. 200). Marriage of her son to her husband's niece mitigates the proverbial conflict between cross-cousins, while cementing the relationship between father and son who frequently live together and co-operate in cultivation. The father's sister's claim is equally strong. In this marriage the boy commonly returns to his mother's brother in his natal house, the girl remaining in her paternal house where she has been brought up. The matrilineal cross-cousin marriage of a man is

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613 Again in all the groups studied The

796 ⁶⁶taravada is believed to be guarded by a group of snake-
564 gods (nagar) who reside in the small grove in the south-east corner of the ancestral gardens.
182 If they are offended, the snakes inflict the taravada with barrenness among women, disease, and
184 child-deaths. They are propitiated by the low caste of Pulluvar. A Pulluvar and his wife
782 come to the Nayar or Tiyyar grove and draw figures of the serpents in green, red, yellow, and
787 black. They sing songs of entreaty to the snakes, and play on a musical instrument, while one
or more women of the propitiating taravada, who have observed sexual continence and food
taboos for several days previously, dance round the figures with hair streaming. The snakes
then 'enter the bodies' of these women, who behave in a dissociated manner and speak with
the voice of the possessing snake-spirit, announcing to taravada members the kind of propitiation
necessary to overcome their wrath. Since they are the guardians of the taravada, are jealous
of the marital sexuality of women born into it, can inflict them with barrenness, and periodically
'enter into' them, it seems likely that these totemic snakes are unconsciously regarded as
phallic symbols of the taravada's male forbears (whether matrilineal or patrilineal). Their
'possession' of the women would thus reflect the incestuous desires of women towards men
of the parental generation in the taravada, and secondarily towards their brothers.

593 I have discussed in general terms the probable existence of unconscious incestuous
182 desires between the individual and members of the parental generation and, as an extension
of this, between siblings. We must now face the problem of whether, in the matrilineal castes,
a regular Oedipus complex exists: that is, of whether a man unconsciously wishes to kill his
father and appropriate his mother, and whether a girl harbours murderous wishes towards
her mother and incestuous ones towards her father.¹

There seems little doubt that in the matrilineal as in the patrilineal castes, a 'normal'
Oedipus complex must develop in early infancy. Even among South Malabar Nayars the
physiological function of the male in procreation is clearly acknowledged, and a child is
expected to resemble its father as well as its matrilineal kin. The Nayar infant must, more-
over, be aware of the marital relationship between its parents, since it commonly sleeps in the
mother's room until the age of about four or until the next sibling is born. At about the age of
five to six, however, a change takes place in the relationship between a South Malabar Nayar
child and its parental generation, and thus, we may suppose, in its unconscious attitudes to
these figures. A boy now comes under the discipline of his mother's brothers, and a relation-
ship of reverence with underlying hostility begins to be formed. A girl becomes aware that
her mother's brothers are her ultimate guardians and, though she may still approach them
freely, she must submit to them. The father drops into the background. In a traditional house-
hold, whereas he might play with them freely as babies, he may not now interfere in the
upbringing of his children. Even today, he may be already divorced and replaced by another
husband: in Palakkara sixteen out of seventy Nayar sibling groups containing children under
the age of fifteen had no contact with the *genitor* or his kin. The mother's brother thus takes
over a great part of the role of *pater*. The relationship admits, however, greater conscious
hostility than does the patrilineal father-child relationship. Despite the reverence demanded
in public, Nayar men sometimes remark privately that they harbour murderous feeling to-
wards their *Advanaran*: several have in fact killed him. Such conscious hostility to the father
would be almost unheard of in a high patrilineal caste. The partial avoidance required between
a man and his sister's son, and the extreme formality of their behaviour, reflect this under-
lying hostility. The relationship with the elder brother is, in etiquette, modelled on that

[114] ¹ My data, so far as Malabar matriliney is concerned, contradict Malinowski's (1926) theory that the Oedipus complex
is absent from the start in matrilineal societies and is replaced by the wish to marry the sister and kill the maternal uncle.
They confirm Ernest Jones's (1924) conclusion that a normal Oedipus complex exists in matrilineal as in patrilineal
societies, but that in matriliney repressed incestuous desire for the mother is extended to an unusual degree to the sister,
and much unconscious hostility to the father deflected towards the mother's brother. Ruben's (1952, ch. 3) refutation of
Malinowski's view and his analysis of the Oedipus complex of Normanby Island are also relevant.

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with the mother's brother; emotionally, hostility is more repressed and greater loyalty demanded. Both avuncular and fraternal relationships pivot on the bond of men to their mothers and sisters: common devotion to these women places the men in a position of equivalence rather than of unity, emphasizes loyalty to the *taradd* rather than interpersonal amity, and points up the rivalry between them.

The suppressed hostility of a boy towards his father with reference to the mother becomes, therefore, among South Malabar Nayers transferred to the mother's brother at the age of four to six. The completeness of this transference appears in death rites. The younger brother or sister's son of a dead man performs his funeral rites, observes pollution for fifteen days, and, if he is the immediate heir, mourning and sexual abstinence for six months to one year. He thenceforth annually offers cooked food to the spirit, which is represented in the form of a terrible and vengeful animal (*predham*, the same word as for the hairy spirits who attack menstruous women). No mourning, pollution, or propitiations were traditionally observed for the *genitor*, about whose spirit no beliefs are held. The observance of pollution (without rites) for the mother's *tdi-tier* was the sole acknowledgment of its fathers' roles in the *taradd*'s perpetuation. The son's unconscious desires remain primarily fixed upon his mother, as appears in his paramount devotion to her in social life and to Bhagavadi in religion. They appear to be secondarily directed to the younger sister and sister's daughter, hence the avoidance and extreme formality demanded in the relationship with them. The rites of first menstruation and pregnancy and the institution of the serpent-gods seem to indicate that unconsciously the mother's brothers and other matrilineal forbears are regarded as *genitores* as well as *patres* and the elder brother as the symbolic spouse of a woman as well as her natural guardian.

Among North Malabar Nayers and Tiyyars, with their virilocal residence, the transference of hostile wishes on the part of the male, and incestuous wishes on the part of the female, from the father to the mother's brother, is less completely carried out. The father is often known throughout his life, when he shares with the mother's brother the role of *pater*. Since legal rights are concentrated with him, the relationship to the mother's brother tends to be more hostile, that to the father, more affectionate. But individual circumstances modify these relationships: a man may align himself alternately with mother's brother and with father according to the financial support each offers him. Death-pollution is observed for both and the vengeful spirits of both are propitiated. As in South Malabar, the primary emotional relationship is always with the mother and the secondary one with the sister, to whose claims those of the wife are subordinated. The etiquette of avoidance and restraint towards the sister and sisters' daughters is identical in north and south. A girl regards her father with greater reverence as her natural guardian, but her behaviour is more stereotyped than among South Malabar Nayers and corresponds more closely with that to the mother's brother. Father-daughter incest is regarded with greater horror than in the south, from which we may surmise that unconscious incestuous desires remain stronger.

On the surface, the South Malabar Tiyyar system with its double unilineal descent and emphasis on the unity of the patrilineal extended family forms a contrast to these matrilineal systems. The father or rather, traditionally, the eldest of the fraternal group of fathers, is head of the family. Sons are brought up under the discipline of all their fathers whom they are expected to regard with equal deference and love. A more regular Oedipus complex appears to develop in this caste. From the age of five to six, a boy must observe reverence to his fathers comparable to that of a Nayar boy to his mother's brothers. He addresses them with deference, and avoids them out of respect. Like a Nayar boy, he is dismissed from intimate contact with the mother about this age, as also with the sisters: they in turn, as he grows older, treat him with deference. The unconscious hostility of the son to his fathers appears in beliefs about

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rank, above the political system of the kingdom, and, in religious belief, the representatives of God on earth. All of these father-figures are collectively physiological fathers of the Nayars, so that in summoning them to deflower their women the Nayars call in real or classificatory fathers as well. When the bridegroom is a higher caste man, moreover (as when Tiyyar barbers call an elder of their caste), his venerable age leaves no doubt of his paternal role.

That the ritual bridegroom should be a father-figure to the community explains my informants' memory that the Asan might deflower Nayar women, but might prefer to forgo his right for money paid by some other bridegroom. It explains why the *desavari* must be present to give permission for the Nayar rite (and the Tandan for the Tiyyar rite) and receive money 'as if to recompense him'. The preliminary gifts by the high-caste Nayar girl's family to Nambūdiri landlords, the *addavari* and the Maharaja also bear out this hypothesis.

Among South Malabar retainer-Nayars and among Tiyyars a high-caste father-surrogate could not be obtained, so that 'they must perforce supply the priest's place themselves'. The retainer-Nayars get round this by selecting an *enangan* to represent the whole caste, who was deputed for the task by village elders and, supernaturally, by the position of the stars at his birth. Even so, the hazardous nature of the rite is indicated by the need to perform it at an auspicious time, when the astrologer (in some respects another father-figure since, though of lower caste, he was traditionally the trainer of Nayar boys in their village gymnasium, and a priest of Bhagavadi) gave the word.

Among North Malabar Tiyyars the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister might tie the *tdli*. She does this on behalf of her son, who is the proper husband for the girl, and before the marriage-pole and the sacred household lamp (divine phallic symbols). In this caste it is fitting that some kinsman or kinswoman of the bridegroom should perform the rite, because Tiyyars are not polyandrous and a girl becomes temporarily incorporated at marriage into her husband's dwelling group. Yet, if we assume the Oedipal fear, the Tiyyar bridegroom could not tie the *tdli* himself, since he is (ideally and often) a cross-cousin. If he is the mother's brother's son, he takes the girl, in this group where paternal claims offset matrilineal, from her *kdranatan* and his own father, a terrifying situation in view of his unconscious Oedipal fears. If he is the father's nephew, he takes her from her father and his own *kdranuran*, an equally dangerous situation. The problem is surmounted by permitting the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister of the girl to 'marry' her on behalf of her son.

The substitution of the barber-woman to tie the *tdli*, and the role of the barber as one intimately associated with the girl's passage to womanhood, may perhaps be understood by considering the general role of barbers in Tiyyar social life. The barbers cut hair for Tiyyars, and in South Malabar though not commonly in the north, their women are midwives. They rank parallel to the Tiyyar washerman with whom they are compared, since both castes have polluting occupations but take part in the rites of birth, girls' puberty, and death. In North Malabar Tiyyar men may marry barber women hypergamously, their children being barbers by matrilineal descent. Barbers are thus socially and sometimes physiologically the 'sons' of Tiyyars. They are also likened by the Tiyyars to their younger brothers. Barbers may not give food to Tiyyars but must attend Tiyyar feasts, when they sit on the left or 'younger' side of the feasting hall, the Tiyyars sitting on the right or 'older' side. Barbers address Tiyyar men as 'elder brother', but Tiyyars address older barber men by name, as they do juniors of their own caste. Despite his low rank, however, the barber is in some situations a paternal figure for Tiyyars. He assists the Tandan in his executive functions and may summon Tiyyar offenders to caste justice. An elderly barber is often a marriage-broker for Tiyyars, but he is primarily a priest for Tiyyar household rites. At a Tiyyar death he instructs the heirs to make offerings to the spirit, in the form of a mud image which he makes. On the fourteenth day, he purifies the household by anointing its members with oil

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834 for young men to go and stay in their wives' houses and visit their own families
593 for business arrangements.

Authority in the family is wielded by the eldest member, who is called *kārnavan*.
613 He has full control of the common property, and manages the income very much
[421] as he pleases. He arranges marriages (*sambandham*) for the boys as well as the
[584] girls of the family. He had till lately full power (at least in practice) of alienating
anything that belonged to them. His will was undisputed law. This is, perhaps,
what is intended to be conveyed by the term *Matri-potestas* in communities of female
[604] descent. But it should be remembered that among the Nāyars the autocrat of
the family is not the mother, but the mother's brother.

613 The power of the *Kārnavan* over the family property has always been, in theory,
421 limited, because the property was supposed to belong to every member of the family
jointly. Till lately, however, it was practically impossible to limit the *Kārnavan's*
power of mortgaging or even fully alienating it, because when it came to litigation
the *Kārnavan* always pleaded that such action as he took was necessary for the
welfare of the family, and justified himself by basing his arguments "on the dis-
cretionary power" vested in him. However, the old theory has lately been asserted
in law that a *Kārnavan* can sell or mortgage the property only with the consent of
the other members of the family.

All the moneys owing to the family can be paid only through him. He alone
can give permission for the use of what belongs to the family. He can punish all
the members of the family, either by depriving them temporarily of their allowance,
or by prohibiting them to enter the house. In short, he is virtually the head of a
tribe rather than the senior member of a family.

613 *The Wife of the Kārnavan.*—The wife of the *Kārnavan* has no standing in the
family; yet as is but natural, she is supposed to be a dark and sinister force working
604 against the interests of the *Tharavad*. Since she does not belong to the *Tharavad*
829 of her husband she has no interest in its well-being, and it is generally supposed that
the *Ammāvi* (the wife of the maternal uncle) is interested only in getting as much
out of her husband's family for her own children as her influence over her husband
allows. All the tales told to children have as the villain the *Ammāvi*, whose position
is not only that of the wife of the maternal uncle, but also the mother-in-law
of the brother. She is universally considered to be a sort of sinister step-
mother.

613 But it must be acknowledged that the Nāyar *Kārnavan* loves his sister's children
604 more than his own. The explanation of this apparently unnatural feeling lies in
586 two directions. First, the father is not necessarily of the same caste as the son.
[664] Secondly, there is always the possibility of a break in the union. Divorce is not
a matter of any difficulty among the Nāyars, both the husband and wife having
equal right to announce such a termination of their connection whenever either of
[593] the parties desires to do so. This instability of relationship is the principal reason

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why a man's affection for his own son is neither so intense nor so permanent as his affection for his sister's son.

Also, in matrilineal communities family tradition descends only through the sister's progeny. As the Nāyars formed a fighting aristocracy before the British conquest, they had naturally acquired family tradition, mottoes and arms, which descend of right only in the female line. Hence also a man looks to the training of his sister's sons to keep up his family tradition. All these contribute to an extraordinary, and at first sight inexplicable, tenderness towards the children of one's sister.

*Relationship.*¹—Among the Nāyars the classificatory system of relationship is prevalent. When the ties of the family extend not only to one's immediate relations but to all who trace descent from the same ancestress in the female line, it is but natural that the terms of close relationship are used to all who belong to the family. As a matter of fact, the distinction between own brothers and collateral brothers does not exist. All the persons of your own generation older than you are called brothers, and equal respect is shown to them. They are called by such terms as big brother, small brother, etc., only when they are older than you. Those who are younger are always called by their names.

All women of your mother's generation are called mothers; those older than your mother are called *Peramma* or *Valiamma*, which means nominal mother or bigger mother, and those younger are called *Kochamma*, little mothers. But unlike among brothers, the distinction between one's mother and other females of the same generation is always maintained. Though respect is paid to all of them alike, own mother is always spoken of as mother, without qualification, and she alone has complete right to command you. Mother's own sisters are also different from those who are only collateral cousins to her. Mother's own brother and all of his generation are called *Ammava* (literally mother's brother). Here also the distinction between own *Ammavas* and collateral *ammavas* was very slight in Nāyar society till nearly thirty years ago. Now, however, one looks more on one's own *Ammava* as different from others, which is obviously due to the influence of the authority of direct relationship inculcated through the new system of education.²

The mother-in-law has no special name. This is, of course, due to the universal prevalence of first cross-cousin marriage. The mother-in-law is generally addressed

¹ Spencer and Gillen (*Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 56) try to prove that the classificatory terminology to express relationship shows the existence in some earlier time of group marriages. Perhaps it does so when such relationship terms are in use in a patrilineal community. On the other hand, in a matrilineal community such terms have nothing to do with the system of marriage, but only with relationship counted on the mother's side.

² Note specially: though all the women of the mother's generation stand in equal relationship, it is only the actual parent that is entitled to be called mother without any qualification to it. All the others are spoken of in comparative terms, as big mother, i.e., elder mother, small mother, i.e., younger mother.

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606 as *Ammari Anna*, the first word being the same as the wife of the mother's brother,
601 and the second an honorific addition to it. Dr. Rivers, in *Kinship and Social*
601 *Organisation*, as well as in *Melanesian Society*, has conclusively shown that wherever
606 first-cousin marriage prevails, there the mother-in-law has no special name. His
114 explanation that this is due to the obvious fact that, in most cases, the mother's
brother's wife is the same person as the mother-in-law, and that the former position
was antecedent to the latter, is fully borne out by the terminology among the Nāyars.

601 Another relation of importance in the Nāyar family life is the father's sister.
604 She has a special name and has a very special function to perform. In Middle
Travancore she is called *Appachi*. Her importance varies according to the status
of the father's family. If the father's family is one of greater importance than
one's own, then the father's sister is a person to be consulted on various matters with
regard to the child. In any case she should be the first to visit the new-born child.
This is called "*Kannom Kalcha*." In the marriage ceremony also she has a prominent
place.

613 *Enangar*.—The whole of Nāyar family life used to be based, though this has
621 decayed of late, on the close relationship with one or more other families, spoken
of as *Enangar* or Allies. A *Tharavad* with its *Enangars* formed a social group rarely
marrying outside its fold and generally arranging all festivities and ceremonies
between themselves. Neither funeral rites, nor marriage ceremony, nor even any
one of the hundred other minor things which go to make up the ordinary life of a
Nāyar family, can take place without the co-operation, or at least the presence, of
a member from the *Enangar* or allied families. The *Enangar* families are always
[564] of the same sub-caste, with a right to eat with you and enter any part of your house.
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613 The *Enangar* system is evidently a kinship organisation, forming an inter-
621 marrying class. The question of its origin is a very difficult one. The prevalent
582 opinion is that it originated in the days when Nāyars fought and farmed in alternate
178 months, when a kinship organisation of some sort was very necessary for safety
and success. This organisation has become very lax of late, though it cannot in
any way be said to be dying out.

582 *Marriage Restrictions*.—The marriage restrictions prevalent among the Nāyars
have nothing much peculiar from the rest of the Hindu society. The bride must
always be younger than the man, and must in strict orthodoxy belong to the same
generation as his. He may not marry his mother's sister's daughter, who is to him
as his own sister. All his sisters, own and collateral, together with ladies of a previous
generation in his family, form a legal incestuous group. A man has, therefore, to
marry either entirely out of the circle of his relations, or from among his cross-
cousins.

Cross-cousin marriage¹ is the orthodox custom. Your maternal uncle's

[91] ¹ By cross-cousins I mean children of brother and sister. The relationship is expressed by
the word *Machuna*, which is, it should be noticed, the same as in the Toda language. Among

585 the last fifty years. All the evidence that we have of this custom among the Nāyars in
175 the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, are from foreign travellers who, it
[609] must be remembered, were not allowed to come within sixty yards of a Nāyar house.
[114] Their evidence, therefore, is an extremely unsatisfactory ground for dogmatising on
595 Nāyar customs. On the other hand, the extensive Malayalam literature of that
174 period contains no single allusion to polyandry. The works of Kunchan Nambiar,
538 whom it is no exaggeration whatever to compare to Molière, though he describes
minutely the social life of the Nāyars of the early eighteenth century with its laxity
of morals, redeemed only by chivalry of conduct, makes no mention whatever of
polyandry. On the other hand, in a famous passage he makes the declaration :
" It is against the laws of all castes for a woman to have four or five husbands."

Nalancku barthavaru thikku thanatu

Natu jatikkum Viddichattalorkanam.

595 How far this statement is decisive it is difficult to say. But one thing seems to
174 be clear from it, that the idea in itself was repugnant to the community as a whole,
though individuals might have practised it here and there.¹

V.—BIRTH AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES.

844 Among the Nāyars, as among all the people whose life is regulated by magico-
religious customs, child-birth is an event of great and mysterious significance.
Especially is this the case with regard to the first child. Therefore the ceremonies
of nativity are of an intenser and more magical character during the time of the
first pregnancy than during subsequent ones. Indeed, the mysterious nature of
childbearing is entirely lost after the first time, and the ceremonies on subsequent
occasions are only a few tabus, which are generally, in the phraseology of Van Genepp,
" rites dynamistes directs et negatives."

843 The most important of the pre-natal ceremonies is *Pulicudi*,² or the drinking
613 of the tamarind juice ; and the customs relating it are as follows : On the appointed
day all the *enangars* (people belonging to the same kingship organization) come to
the house early in the morning, and the pregnant woman is taken out by one of them
and bathed, after rubbing oil all over her. Then she is dressed for the occasion
and, entering the house from the north, sits looking eastward. The astrologer,
[564] who being of a lower caste commonly stands in the outer courtyard, calculates the
[178] auspicious hour. He sends word when the time is come, and the *Ammāci* (the
[604] wife of the mother's brother, and mother-in-law by right of the brother) pours a few
[593] drops of tamarind juice in a small silver bowl. The brother or the uncle of the

¹ See Note 3, Appendix.

² Dr. Rivers makes some obviously erroneous deductions based upon this word, for which see
note on " The Similarities between Nāyars and the Todas," Appendix, Note 2.

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pregnant woman, taking a sword, generally kept for this purpose, and holding it in the left hand points it to her mouth. The juice is then poured on it in such a way as to fall by drops into her open mouth. After this, one of the women of the *enangu* group aneers the body and head of the pregnant woman with coco-nut oil and takes her to the tank. She is also required to choose one from a collection of different grains, and it is believed you can say from the choice what the sex of the child is going to be.

The significance of the ceremony seems to be twofold. First, it is the official notification to the allied families as well as to the local village groups of the fact that a woman is lawfully pregnant in the house. The intervention of the *Ammāri* or the mother's brother's wife is supposed to show that everything is as it ought to be. It is, therefore, in the first place merely a social announcement. Secondly, the actual ceremony with the sword is supposed to have the effect of making the child a warrior, and it is believed to impart the virtues of bravery, manliness and honest dealing. It is, therefore, in the classification of Van Genepp, a rite direct, sympathetic, automatic and positive. The tamarind juice is believed to create sensitiveness and honour. It is a "contagionist" rite. Whenever a man shows cowardice, the question that is asked as a mark of contempt is: "Were you not born after *Pulicudi*?" or "did not your mother drink the tamarand juice?"

After the *Pulicudi* there are many prohibitions which a pregnant woman has to respect. Of this the most important is the absolute sexual tabu which dates from the *Pulicudi* to forty days after the childbirth. Other tabus are mainly connected with food and are mostly "contagionist" positively or negatively. Thus the woman is not supposed to take very warm food, as it might scorch the head of the child; she is not supposed to eat much hot food (chilia, pepper, etc.), because it might put out the eyes of the child. There are no definite rules about these, but every mother in her desire to do the child no possible harm keeps herself away from all doubtful matter.

After the birth of the child there is a mild pollution (as compared to the strong untouchable pollution caused by death) in the family. This pollution does not carry any disabilities except the prohibition to enter any sacred precincts. On the fifteenth day there is a purificatory ceremony, but there are no festivities or celebrations connected with it.

The mother and the child are accommodated in a special room which no man may enter. Unmarried girls, unless they are little children, are also not allowed to go near. The child, of course, can be seen by all after the cutting and burying of the umbilical cord. It is handed round to the father and other interested relations. No kind of food except the mother's milk is given to it, and, if the mother died at the birth of the child, it is generally given the milk of some relations or even of outsiders who have children of almost the same age. The person whose milk the child thus drinks, though she be an outsider, is considered equal to its own mother, and her children are considered the same as own brothers. There is a story of a Nayar

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177 intentions to register *sambandhams* was thirty-six in 1896—97,
582 twenty-four in 1897—98 and only fourteen in 1898—99. " He
585 accounts for the falling off as follows:—

The mass of the people continues to regard the marriage law with aversion and suspicion, and even the educated members of the community who are in favour of the measure, shrink from taking advantage of it from fear of offending the elderly members of their *taravids*, and all the powerful Nambuthiris and other great landlords. The Registrar of Calicut also points out, that the power conferred by the marriage law, to make provision for one's own wife and children, has hitherto acted as some inducement to persons to register their *sambandhams*, but as Act V of 1898 (Madras) which came into force from 2nd September 1898, enables the followers of the *marumakkathayam* law to attain this object without registering their *sambandhams*, and "unnecessarily curtailing their liberty of action, and risking the chances of divorce proceedings," he thinks it unlikely that registration under the marriage law would increase in future.

595 Among the Nayars of ancient times in Cochin, Malabar and Travancore, there was polyandry. In the report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, it is said, that there is evidence to show that it still lingers in Ponnani and Walluvanad Taluks, especially on the Cochin border of the former Taluk.¹ Apart from its existence in former times, it may be said that nowhere in these States is the custom still found to linger, no admitted instance of it has come to my notice in the course of my investigations into the customs and manners of the castes in the various parts of the State. An account of these customs as it existed in ancient times, and the theories that have been advanced in respect of it are of some ethnographical importance, and it may not be out of place here.

593 The Nayars of ancient times were, in most cases, neither
604 regularly married, nor did they care much, when married,
582 to support their wives and children; but their nephews (sons
564 of sisters), who were their legitimate heirs, were properly looked after. Nayar women generally mated with Brahmans or Nayars, but never with people of lower caste under pain of

1. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 83.

death. At ten or twelve years of age of a girl, her mother begged some one of their relations to marry her, and they did so by tying a marriage badge (*tali*). Then the bridegroom would leave her and go away without any consideration of his new relationship. She might also remain with him if he wished it. If she was not inclined to do so, the mother would then go about seeking some one to take her daughter to live with him. If the girl happened to be pretty, three or four Nayars would agree to live with her, and the more lovers she had, the more highly was she esteemed. Each man had his appointed time from midday to the next day at the same hour, during which some signal was placed at the door so that the others might not enter. She was at liberty to dismiss whomsoever she disliked. The advantage of this system was, that a man, who had not the means to support a wife, might have only a share of the cost of the maintenance. Nevertheless, there was a difficulty in ascertaining the fathers of children, who generally lived with the mothers by whom they were brought up. The fathers, in such cases, were named by the mothers. It is said that the kings made this law in order that the Nayars might not abandon their service. According to this system, the fathers were not succeeded by their sons but by nephews (sons of sisters). The above is a summarised account from 'The Travels on the East coast of Africa and Malabar' by Duarte Barbosa, from those of Lodovico Varthema, as also from the voyage of Frankoy Pyard, page 371.

The orthodox view or rather the traditional account according to the *Keralamahatmyam*,¹ is that certain celestial damsels were brought from the world of Indra by Parasurama to satisfy the sexual cravings of the Kerala Brahmans; and that at Vrishabhadri (Trichur), he pronounced his commandment to the *Sdmanthan* and *Sudra* castes to gratify the desires of the said Brahmans, ordering them to put off chastity and the cloth which covered their breasts, and declaring that promiscuous intercourse with three or four men in common was devoid of the least taint of sin. This is certainly a very convenient arrangement for the junior members of the Nambuthiri families to be relieved of their life-long bachelorhood (*Bramhacharyam*) without any

¹ Origin of the custom of polyandry.

are allowed greater freedom in the choice as well as in the divorce of husbands (*sambandhakdrans*), and the females in the family do not interfere in their freedom so long as it does not produce any domestic scandal. The orthodox view is that, as the woman is not independent, she seldom thinks of relinquishing the husband. Arbitrary divorce is thus discouraged, and adultery is a grave social offence. A wife, who is disputatious, who steals her husband's property, who favours another than her husband, who converses with strangers, who is gluttonous, who enters strange houses, should be put away even though she may have born ten sons. Litigation between two families and disagreement between a husband and wife are also the causes. Social stigma follows the adulterer, and the adulteress loses her status in society.

A Nayar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during her first pregnancy. First during and after the seventh month of pregnancy, she bathes and worships the deity in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter, over which holy *mantrams* have been recited by the temple priest or by Nambuthiris. This is done generally till delivery. *Pulikudi* (tamarind juice drinking) is an indispensable ceremony performed for every pregnant woman, by the rich and poor alike, on an auspicious day, in the ninth month of pregnancy. An auspicious day, nay, even the very hour, is fixed by the astrologer. The ceremony opens by the planting of a twig of the *ambāzha* tree (*Spondias mangifera*) on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the inner court-yard (*nadumittam*) or the northern wing of the house. At the appointed hour (*muhūrtam*), the pregnant woman, after having been bathed and properly attired, is conducted to the northern block of the house (*vatikkini*) where she is seated facing eastwards. The *Ammāyi* or the uncle's wife, whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the court-yard, and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, or uncle, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right hand ring-finger. Holding a country knife (*pisankatti*) in his left hand, with its point towards the north, he pours the tamarind juice over his knife with his right hand three times

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[804] is performed. All the members of the family take part in this ceremony under the direction of the priest who belongs to the *Athikurussi* class. The ceremony consists in filling up three [793] *para* measures with paddy and one *edangali* of raw rice, and [564] placing them near the corpse together with a burning lamp of local manufacture.

[35] A mango tree is cut, and as much fuel as is necessary for the burning of the dead is collected and placed at the south-eastern corner of the compound which is always set apart for the burning or burial of the dead. A small pit about the size of the dead body is dug. Across this are placed three long stumps of the plantain tree, one at each end and one in the middle, and on these the foundation of the pyre is laid. The dead body which is placed on a bamboo bier is carried to the cremation ground and placed on the pyre with its head to the south, then fuel is laid over it, together with a little camphor, sandal-wood and ghee, if the family can afford the expense. Before the body is placed on the pyre, the *anandaravan*, the member of the family immediately junior to the deceased, tears from the new cloths laid on the corpse, a piece sufficient to go round his own loins. He wears it round his waist and holds in his hand or tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron, generally a long key. It must be noted here, that all those members of the family who are older than the deceased may not take any part whatsoever in the funeral ceremony or in any subsequent ceremony after the cremation or burial, but all adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the [593] pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or in his [604] absence, his nephew (sister's son), sets fire to the pyre beginning at the head of the corpse; but if a son is left by the deceased, he sets fire to the pyre beginning at the feet. In the case of a woman, the son has to set fire to the pyre, or in his absence, one junior in age to her has the right to do so. It is a matter of great importance that the whole pyre should burn at once, and great care towards that end is taken. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the family go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound of a Nayar house). The eldest man who has the piece of cloth and the key carries a pot of water, and all return to the place of cremation. When the body is almost consumed by fire, the senior member carries the pot of water thrice round it, letting

On the third day after the death, all those who are related to the *tarawid* by matrimonial alliances combine and give a feast to the inmates of the house and to the neighbours. This is called the *Patni kanji*. On the seventh day a return feast is given by the members of the *tarawid*, to all relations and neighbours. Between the seventh and the fourteenth day after death, no ceremonies are performed, but the members of the family are under pollution, and then on the fourteenth day comes the *Sanchayanam*. It is the disposal of the calcined remains, the ashes of the deceased. The male members of the *tarawid* go to the place of cremation, and picking up the unburnt bones of the deceased, place them in an earthen pot which is sundried—not burnt in the usual way—and cover up the mouth of the pot with a piece of cloth. The eldest carries it and, followed by the rest, proceeds to the nearest river (it must be a running stream) into which it is thrown. In some places the bones are collected on the seventh and preserved in a pot which, when convenient, is carried to Benares, Rameswaram, Gaya, or to Thirunelly in Wynad and there deposited as above described. Such a disposal is called *Ashtagaya-Sradham*, and puts an end to the need of all earthly ceremonies—nor is there any need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. The belief is that the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead gives peace to the departed spirit, which will not thereafter injure the living members of the *tarawid*.

On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony at which a man of the *Attikurissi* clan officiates as priest. In the morning the members of the family wear cloths washed by a *Vélan* (washerman) and assemble together for purification by the Nayar priest who throws on them, both before and after bathing, paddy, rice, gingelly seeds, and the holy mixture (milk, oil, etc.). The Elayad or the Brahman priest performs the *Punyidham* or purification of the house, well, etc., and on the sixteenth day he takes the place of the priest. On the evening of the fifteenth day and the morning of the sixteenth, the priests and the villagers are sumptuously fed, and presents of cloth are made to the latter and money to the former. In the Chittur Taluk, the priestly functions are sometimes performed by the Elayad, and *Deeksha* (leaving the body unshaved for forty-one days or a year) is observed by the nephew and the son of the deceased. The one who is under this mark of mourning makes offerings of rice balls

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[782]

613 This psychological pull towards matrilineal kin also applies to the wives.
593 When they decide an important matter they always ask their maternal uncle's
604 advice, as well as that of their husband. Even the younger generation have great
182 affection for, and a tendency to depend on, the mother's brothers almost in
the same way they do their father. Particularly, if the father dies, it is the mother's
brother who actually takes the responsibility. (See the case of 57.

613 I think the function of matrilineal elements found in these relations is largely
591 supported by the fact that matrilineal members reside near each other, where
182 they can meet almost every day. Indeed the factors which are vital to the
destruction of matrilineal coherence are created by those members who es-
tablished their life with their wife and children in places geographically distant
from the land of the Nayar, Kerala, such as New Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta,
for example the members of F, K and L in Diagram. In earlier phases of a
marriage, a man who has to reside very far away because of his job, usually leaves
his wife in her mother's house (as the cases of 91, 44 and 50), but when
his job becomes permanent and he has children, usually he takes his wife and
children to his new place. In the course of time, these members tend to have less
and less contact with their matrilineal kin at home, which naturally leads to
social and economic distance from the latter.

Thus the dispersion of members in terms of geographical distance affects
to the actual function of the matrilineal group. In fact I found that the style of
talking about the members of F, K and L sounds considerably different from
that used for the members who reside in the same locality. If geographical
distance is within Kerala, it is a quite different matter from the case of outside
Kerala: for example, a member of a matrilineal group in Ernakulum, resides at
[844] Trivandrum. In such a case, wife certainly comes back to her mother's house for
[796] child birth, and the members come together at important ceremonial occasions
of the matrilineal group. Within Kerala, the land of Nayar, such activities are
taken for granted in the society.

613 A great geographical dispersion of the members results in the decrease of
591 the functional members of the matrilineal group centred on the *tarwad*, but on
602 the other hand, this local matrilineal group would increase its size by peripheral
182 members of non-matrilineal descendants: children of the matrilineal male
members including their wives. These children stand very close to their father's
matrilineal kin, with whom their father keeps frequent contact. The children
feel the matrilineal kin of their father equally important to that of the mother.
When all matrilineal members lived in a *tarwad*, the children were aware of the
tarwad members of their non-resident-father, recognizing them as an important
affinal group (*tarwad*). But I think the degree of familiarity towards these
members greatly differs from that towards the matrilineal kin of the father with
[594] whom they live. Today the actual importance of the father who is the authority
182 in the household, brings his matrilineal kin much closer to his children.

613 It is very interesting, I found, that in all households, the fathers of which
602 were the members of Marayil *tarwad*, an enlarged picture of Prabaty Amma,
353 the foundress of the *tarwad*, was placed at the centre of the guest room. Their

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595 law as by a kind of tacit convention, it scarcely ever happening that it exceeds six or seven. The woman, however, is under no obligation to admit above a single attachment, though not less respected for using her [201] privilege to its utmost extent. If one of the husbands happens to come to the house when she is employed with another, he knows that circumstance by certain signals left at the door that his turn is not come, and 564 departs very resignedly." Writing about the same time, 595 Sonnerat * says that "these Brāhmans do not marry, but have the privilege of enjoying all the Nairresses. [648] This privilege the Portuguese who were esteemed as a great caste, obtained and preserved, till their drunkenness and debauchery betrayed them into a commerce with all sorts of women. The following right is established by the customs of the country. A woman without [851] shame may abandon herself to all men who are not of an inferior caste to her own, because the children (notwithstanding what Mr. de Voltaire says) do not belong to [604] the father, but to the mother's brother; they become his legitimate heirs at their birth, even of the crown if he is king." In his 'Voyages and Travels', Kerr writes as follows. † "By the laws of their country these Nayres cannot marry, so that no one has any certain or acknowledged son or father; all their children being born of mistresses, with each of whom three or four Nayres cohabit by agreement among themselves. Each one of this confraternity dwells a day in his turn with the joint mistress, counting from noon of one day to the same time of the next, after which he departs, and another

* Voyage to the East Indies, 1774 and 1781.

† R. Kerr. General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1811, History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese between the years 1497 and 1535, from the original Portuguese of Herman Lopes de Castaneda.

comes for the like time. Thus they spend their time⁵⁹⁵ without the care or trouble of wives and children, yet⁵⁶⁴ maintain their mistresses well according to their rank. Any one may forsake his mistress at his pleasure ; and, in like manner, the mistress may refuse admittance to any one of her lovers when she pleases. These mistresses are all gentlewomen of the Nayre caste, and the Nayres, besides being prohibited from marrying, must not attach themselves to any woman of a different rank. Consider-^[851] ing that there are always several men attached to one^[604] woman, the Nayres never look upon any of the children born of their mistresses as belonging to them, however strong a resemblance may subsist, and all inheritances among the Nayres go to their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, born of the same mothers, all relationship being counted only by female consanguinity and descent. This strange law prohibiting marriage was established that they might have neither wives nor children on whom to fix their love and attachment ; and that, being free from all family cares, they might more willingly devote themselves entirely to warlike service." The^[578] term son of ten fathers is used as a term of abuse among Nāyars to this day.* Tipū Sultān is said to have issued the following proclamation to the Nāyars, on the occasion of his visit to Calicut in 1788. "And,^[648] since it is a practice with you for one woman to associate with ten men, and you leave your mothers and sisters unconstrained in their obscene practices, and are thence all born in adultery, and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts of the field ; I hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices, and live like the rest of mankind." †

* Wigram, Malabar Law and Custom, Ed. 1900.

† T. A. Kalyanakrishna Aiyar, Malabar Quart. Review, II, 1903.

In a recent account of a Nāyar wedding in high life⁵⁸⁵ in Travancore, the host is said to have distributed flowers, ¹⁷⁷ attar, etc., to all his Hindu guests, while the European, Eurasian, and other Christian guests, partook of cake and wine, and other refreshments, in a separate tent. The Chief Secretary to Government proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom.

The following note on Nāyar pregnancy ceremonies⁸⁴³ was supplied to Mr. Fawcett by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nāyar. "A woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh^[264] month, she (at least among the well-to-do classes) bathes, and worships in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal a small quantity of butter, over which mantrams (consecrated formulæ) have been said by the temple priest, or by Nambūtiris. This is generally done till delivery. Another, and even more important ceremony, is the puli-kuti (drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day and hour are fixed by the local astrologer.^[787] The ceremony begins with the planting of a twig of the ampasham tree on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the principal courtyard (natu-muttam) of the taravād. At the appointed hour or muhūrtam, the pregnant woman, after having bathed, and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (vatakini or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastward. The ammayi, or uncle's wife, whose presence^[604] on the occasion is necessary, goes to the courtyard, and, plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to⁸⁴³ the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is neces-⁵⁹³ sary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his

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593 right ring finger. Holding a country knife (pissan kathi) in his left hand, which he directs towards the mouth, he pours the tamarind juice over the knife with his right hand three times, and it dribbles down the knife [602] into the woman's mouth, and she drinks it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates.

843 After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, the woman is asked to pick out one of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet she happens to select is supposed to declare the sex of the child in [574] her womb. The ceremony winds up with a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and friends of the family."

In connection with pregnancy ceremonies, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the puli-kuti ceremony is performed at the seventh, or sometimes the ninth month. The husband has to contribute the rice, cocoanut, and plantains, and present seven vessels containing sweet-meats. In the absence of a brother, a Mārān pours the juice into the mouth of the woman." It is noted in the Cochin Census Report, 1901, that "the puli-kuti ceremony consists in administering to the woman with child a few pills of tamarind and other acid substances. The pills are placed at the end of a knife-blade, and pushed into the mouth of the woman by means of a gold ring.

[593] The ceremony, which in a way corresponds to the pumsavana of the Brāhmins, is performed either by a [604] brother or uncle of the woman, and, in the absence of both, by the husband himself. Unlike Brāhmins, the ceremony is performed only at the time of the first pregnancy." In the eighth month, a ceremony, called garbha veli uzhiyal, is performed by the Kaniyan (astrologer) to remove the effects of the evil eye.

The ceremonies observed in connection with pregnancy are described as follows in the Gazetteer of

NORTH TIYYAR

The organization of kinship among the Tiyyar is so similar to the Nayar castes that an extended discussion is unnecessary. Gough observes a difference of degree in the question of the locality of marriage: whereas Nayar men may return to the lands of their MB and marry there, the Tiyyar tend to be grouped together in patrilocal clusters, except that there are some among them who also return to live with their MB (1961, p. 409). These slight differences are unlikely to be of great significance, for the reader should recall that many of these marriages take place in the same village or area, that in this region houses and huts are easy to build and that Nayar men tend to build houses for their wives and children as well.

In Gough's writings the similarity of the kin structure between the Tiyyar and the Sinhalese is particularly evident. The claims of the cross-cousins upon each other, the categorical Dravidian terminology, the nature of the marriage tie, and the various details of custom clearly indicate that we are dealing with the same cultural idiom.

The claims of the MB and FZ are manifested in *rites de passage*. In the *tali* ceremony (which is the well-known prepuberty rite in this area) both these persons appear, and the FZ (or MB wife) ties the *tali* as a "potential mother-in-law" (Gough, 1955a, p. 58).

The role of the cross-cousins is perhaps more revealing. "The cross-cousin's claim to become a girl's husband . . . must be met at the . . . marriage ceremony if the girl marries some other man. As the couple leave the house, the girl's cross-cousin steps forward in mock attack . . . He is bought off by the bridegroom with a nominal fee and the couple then pass unmolested" (Gough, 1955a, p. 59).⁸ This symbolic statement is identical to the Sinhalese, where the cross-cousin stops the bridal couple at the gate and demands his rights. He is given one hundred betel leaves and the couple moves on.

The Tiyyar of Cochin

It is intriguing to study the kin structure of the Tiyyar caste South Malabar and Cochin—the same term as in North Malabar—which

⁸ There is an interesting contradiction in Gough's material: though she writes of the similarity of the Nayar and the Tiyyar, she notes that with the Tiyyar the MBS (i.e., FZD) is the correct marriage partner (1955a, p. 57), whereas with the Nayar the FZS (i.e., MBD) is considered the rightful claimant (1961, p. 398). In view of Dumont's discussion, it would be interesting to know whether significant preferences are involved. Gough does not pursue the matter, but given the contradictions involved in patrilateral cross-cousin marriage (e.g., it cannot be combined with hypergamy rules) it is likely that Gough is merely using a shorthand formula for symmetrical cross-cousin marriage.

564 here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as
611 usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general struc-
[591] tures as elsewhere.

613 We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad*
like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to
be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the
worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be
595 patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this
[591] area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely
[171] permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access
to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage
585 again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding
171 the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with
various groups in Ceylon.

593 Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their
[428] natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary rela-
[586] tions between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to
her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the
[765] death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe
[183] ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pol-
lution and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

604 The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in
588 numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through
[613] a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which
[605] she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-
cousin. Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ) parts her hair in certain
pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB,
and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative
of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

582 Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though
605 with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is
114 in the North (1955a, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to
actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are
informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must
conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categori-
cal cross-cousin marriage.

601 I have no information about the terminology of reference or address,
576 though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to
those of the North Tiyyar.

121 I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected
602 in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the
various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual
terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong

121 are perpetuated as indices of status—to the extent, indeed, that with
551 the matrilineal Thangal group, who also claim patrilineal descent
from the Prophet, an elaborate combination of patronymics and
matronymics has been developed (1959, p. 501).

CONCLUSION

121 In view of the great number of communities that have remained
171 untouched, the evidence considered in detail may seem to offer only a
very narrow theoretical base. This is not so. We have attempted to
show that the general structural model may be connected to a great
variety of descent patterns. Only a few cases would be sufficient to
demonstrate the point. We have found many more. We have also
noted the interesting balance in the customary recognition given to
the formal claims of the paternal and maternal relatives upon the
children of the marriage. In structures such as the Tanjore Brahman,
where the father-son relationship is assured by common residence and
inheritance, it is precisely the rights of the MB which are elaborated
at all rites *de passage*, and the ZS has formal obligations at this man's
funeral.

121 In the matrilineal structure of Malabar and Ceylon we find in con-
171 trast that the great proliferation of ceremonial is concerned with the
rights and obligations of the father. Quite apart from the entire com-
plex of *Tali kettu kalyanam* in Malabar, we may note that the obliga-
tions of the son at this father's funeral receive special emphasis, par-
ticularly among the Nayar. As Fawcett notes in connection with Nayar
funerals: "The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none sur-
viving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son) sets fire to the pyre at the
head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the
same time to the pyre at the foot of the corpse" (Thurston, 1906, p.
209). At this most solemn occasion the Nayar and the Kandyan
Sinhalese agree on balancing the obligations of the offspring of brother
and sister, for with the Sinhalese, too, the ZS as well as the son must
partake in the final rites of a man.

121 There is always the emphasis on the connections between the chil-
593 dren of the brother and the sister. Brother and sister must be sepa-
605 rated, but their offspring must also be united. Dumont writes of the
double principles of consanguinity and affinity, but it seems that the
two must be intermeshed to protect and perpetuate the purity of
the family. Perhaps this is an aspect of the union of those divine crea-
tive principles which one hears so much about in Indian philosophy:
male and female, man and wife, the Brahman Lord and his consort,
Shiva and Shakti. These are two, but they are also one.

121 Even the terminology of kinship exemplifies the idea of the union
601